Telephone service in Gujarat

1849. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SING: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the telephone services which are being provided in Anand and Vallabha Vidyanagar in Kaira District (Gujarat) are very much in a bad shape because these telephone exchanges are manually operated.

(b) whether Government have received a memorandum from the Telephone Subscribers' Association, Anand in the matter and also letters from Members of Parliament to take immediate measures to replace these exchanges by electronic ones; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken thereon and by when these telephone exchanges are likely to be replaced by electronic ones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) Due to the limitations of manual exchanges the services are not to the satisfaction of the subscribers.

(b) Yes, Sir. Some complaints from subscribers association of Anand and Vallabh Vidyanager have been received. Also there is request for replacement of existing manual-exchange by automatic exchange.

(c) 4000 lines and 1500 lines ICP type Crossbar exchanges will be installed at Anand and Vallabh Vidyanagar respectively. Equipment for both these exchanges are received. Installation work at Anand is being taken up shortly. Installation of Vallabh Vidyanagar will be taken up on completion of exchange building.

There is no scheme at present for installation of electronic exchanges in these places.

Shortage of Industrial alcohol in West Bengal

1850. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any communication from the West Bengal Government requesting for intervention so that Uttar Pradesh Government does not increase excise duty on spirit heavily;

(b) whether Government are aware of the acute shortage of spirit faced by West Bengal industries; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS AND PETRO-CHEMICALS (SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH): (a) Recently telex messages have been received from the West Bengal Government conveying their difficulties in the lifting of alcohol due to a high rate of export pass fee levied in U.P. Government has already requested U.P. Government to reduce the export pass fee on rectified spirit for industrial use.

(b) and (c) Duty Free import of denatured alcohol is being permitted since February, 1985 in view of insufficient indigenous availabilty. Industrial Units in West Bengal have been granted permissions for duty-free import of 227 lakh litres of denatured alcohol. Allocations have been made for supplies of both denatured and rectified spirit from U.P. and Maharashtra.

Karnal refinery

1851. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of the private companies which have applied for selection as co-promoter of Karnal refinery;